

has the stronger army, England or Russia? Why England does not take Afghanistan ? Did I think the Zil-es-Sultan had any chance of succeeding his father? but several times reverted to what seemed uppermost in his mind, the chances of a British occupation of Southern Persia, a subject on which I was unwilling to enter. He complained bitterly of Persian exactions, and said that the demand made on him this year is exactly double the sum fixed by the Amin-es-Sultan.

It is not easy to estimate the legitimate taxation. Probably it averages two *townans*, or nearly fifteen shillings a family. The assessment of the tribes is fixed, but twenty, forty, and even sixty per cent extra is often taken from them by the authorities, who in their turn are squeezed at Tihran or Isfahan. Every cow, mule, ass, sheep, and goat is taxed. Horses pay nothing.

In order to get away from perilous topics, which had absolutely no interest for the women, I told him how-interested I was in seeing all his people clothed in blue Manchester cottons, though England does not grow a tuft of cotton or a plant of indigo. I mentioned that the number of people dependent on the cotton industry in Britain equals the whole population of Persia, and this made such an impression on him that he asked me to repeat it three times. He described his tribe as prosperous, raising more wheat than it requires, and exporting 1000 *tumans'* worth of carpets annually.

It is curious that nomadic semi-savages should not only

sow and harvest crops, and make carpets of
dyed wool, as
well as goats-hair rugs and cloth, horse-
furniture, *kkur-*
jinsy and socks of intricate patterns, but that
they should
understand the advantages of trade, and
export not only
mules, colts, and sheep, but large quantities
of charcoal,
which is carried as far as Hamadan; as well
as *gaz*, gall-
nuts, tobacco, opium, rice, gum mastic,
clarified butter, the